

TOP SECRET

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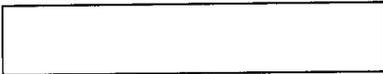
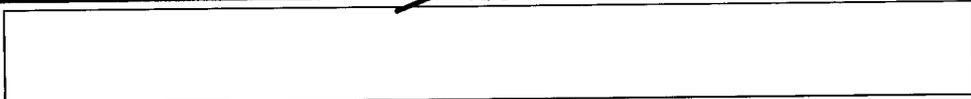
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

11 April 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence
FROM : William W. Wells
Deputy Director for Operations
SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Certain Matters of a Front Offensive Operation in the Initial Period of a War

1. The enclosed Intelligence Information Special Report is part of a series now in preparation based on the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". This article recounts the most important aspects of a front offensive operation in the Northwestern Theater of Military Operations, which were discussed at the Seventh Military Science Conference of the Leningrad Military District. The matters touched upon include the conduct of agent reconnaissance and radio and radiotechnical reconnaissance, the conduct of the initial nuclear strike in regard to the advisability of employing missiles and aviation successively or simultaneously and, concerning air defense, the conditions for setting up point cover and area cover, and cooperation between surface-to-air missile troops and aviation. Also discussed were methods of combat actions, cooperation between fleets and fronts, the supplying of front troops with missiles, and troop control. This article appeared in Issue No. 4 (65) 1962.

2. Because the source of this report is extremely sensitive, this document should be handled on a strict need-to-know basis within recipient agencies. For ease of reference, reports from this publication have been assigned



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Intelligence Information Special Report

Page 3 of 12 Pages

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MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Certain Matters of a Front Offensive Operation in the Initial Period of a War

SOURCE Documentary Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article which appeared in Issue No. 4 (65) for 1962 of the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal "Military Thought". The authors of this article are Colonel L. Vinnitskiy and Lieutenant Colonel V. Ofitserov. This article recounts the most important aspects of a front offensive operation in the Northwestern Theater of Military Operations, which were discussed at the Seventh Military Science Conference of the Leningrad Military District. The matters touched upon include the conduct of agent reconnaissance and radio and radiotechnical reconnaissance, the conduct of the initial nuclear strike in regard to the advisability of employing missiles and aviation successively or simultaneously, and, concerning air defense, the conditions for setting up point cover and area cover, and cooperation between surface-to-air missile troops and aviation. Also discussed were methods of combat actions, cooperation between fleets and fronts, the supplying of front troops with missiles, and troop control.

End of Summary

Comment:

The authors also collaborated with Colonel I. Lyapunov and Colonel N. Smirnov on "Combat Operations of Troops under Special Conditions" in Issue No. 6 (67) for 1962

Certain Matters of a Front Offensive Operation
in the Initial Period of a War

(Based on materials of a military science conference)

by
Colonel L. Vinnitskiy
and
Lieutenant Colonel V. Ofitserov

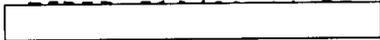
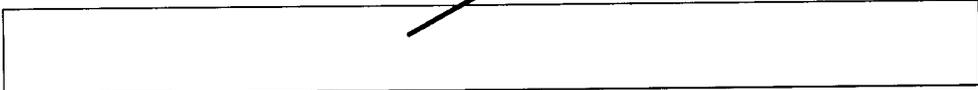
The Seventh Military Science Conference of the Leningrad Military District had the goal of summing up research on the most important matters of a front offensive operation of the initial period of a war under the conditions of the Northwestern Theater of Military Operations.

General-Leytenant I. L. Tsarenko, chief of staff of the military district, delivered the main report.

In the course of the conference primary attention was given to discussion of the following issues.

Reconnaissance. In examining this matter it was emphasized that at the present time only the armed forces of Norway have means of nuclear attack (one Honest John battalion). With such nuclear equipping it is not very likely that the armies of the capitalist countries located in the theater would initiate combat actions against the Soviet Union. Obviously, the receipt of direct military assistance from allies and above all weapons of mass destruction will be one of the signs of their preparation for war. Considering this, in the period of political tension which obviously will precede the beginning of military actions, we should expect the transfer of nuclear warheads, missiles, and NATO troops, as well as the rebasing of aviation to the territory of the capitalist countries of the Northwestern Theater of Military Operations. The main efforts of front reconnaissance should be concentrated on the eve of war to ascertain all of this.

In the opinion of some officers, this information can be obtained most successfully by agent reconnaissance, which should be organized to the depth of the entire theater, that is, over



1,000 kilometers or more. Colonel Kedola emphasized in his speech that agent reconnaissance should be briefed in a timely manner so that the placement of their forces will not be delayed.

Prior to the beginning of military actions important tasks will be assigned to radio and radiotechnical reconnaissance. Even if the enemy undertakes operational camouflage measures this reconnaissance will be able to obtain valuable data about radars and control and guidance posts of nuclear weapons units and aviation units, as well as of major combined-arms staffs.

As regards other types and methods of reconnaissance, such as air reconnaissance and the infiltration of reconnaissance groups, they can be employed only when the front begins to conduct active combat actions.

The conduct of the initial nuclear strike. In the main report the idea was put forth that the initial nuclear strike is a measure prepared and conducted in the front and in support of the front. Proceeding from this, it is hardly correct to examine it always as an indispensable integral part of the initial strategic strike delivered by the means of the Supreme High Command. They are identical neither in targets nor in scope, and the time limits for their conduct might not coincide.

This position was supported by the majority of the participants in the conference. However, General Blagorazumov and Colonel Turchin think that front and strategic nuclear strikes are integral parts of the overall nuclear strike conducted by the General Headquarters. And therefore these combat actions must not be separated, but drawn together as closely as possible in terms of target, place and time.

In the speeches of General Nikitin, General Kritskiy, Colonel Gayvoronskiy, Colonel Tolbukhin and others, the matter of the possible procedure for conducting the initial nuclear strike was examined in detail. It was indicated that of the means for delivering nuclear warheads in the initial strike, missiles and aviation which can be employed either successively or simultaneously are used. In the latter case the massed delivery of a strike is ensured, enemy employment of means of protection is impeded, and the development within a short period of time of extensive zones having dangerous levels of radiation considerably





reduces his capabilities for maneuvering. In addition to this, the enemy is confronted with carrying out a difficult task -- to eliminate the aftereffects of the nuclear strikes at many points simultaneously.

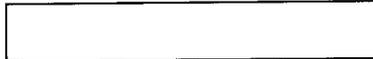
However, this variant for the delivery of a strike also has a number of substantial shortcomings. Even with the most meticulous allocation of zones for missile and aviation actions, the possibility of aircraft entering disturbed and radioactively contaminated layers of the atmosphere is not ruled out.

In the case of successive employment of these means, when missiles begin to operate first, and then aviation, the spacial limitations are removed from the missile large units and units. They can be employed more effectively against any target which is accessible to them in the entire zone of the front. The aviation will not only have more certainty of hitting the targets designated for it, but under more favorable conditions will conduct reconnaissance of new targets, and final reconnaissance of those which were detected earlier.

An overall and very substantial shortcoming of both variants is that the nuclear strike must be delivered primarily against stationary targets which were reconnoitered in peacetime. Meanwhile, from the standpoint of the tasks confronting the front, it is especially important to destroy the nuclear means of attack and troops of the enemy, which in most instances are mobile targets.

In connection with this, at the conference the possibility of conducting the initial nuclear strike in the sequence missile-aviation-missile was discussed. Using such a variant the first nuclear salvo will be delivered by missiles against reconnoitered enemy nuclear means and against his air defense system which, as is known, consists mainly of stationary installations. After the enemy air defense system is weakened, it is advantageous to carry out the next series of nuclear strikes with the forces of aviation. It is advisable at the same time to assign it the task of conducting reconnaissance for the purpose of detecting the nuclear means and main grouping of the enemy. Upon being rapidly processed, the reconnaissance data obtained by aviation should be utilized for the second missile salvo which will be delivered mainly against mobile targets.





In conducting the initial strike, the division of the combat actions of missiles into several salvos and the insertion of aviation actions between them permits the reconnaissance capabilities of the front to be expanded, more complete data about mobile enemy targets to be obtained and, in the final analysis, the scale of the enemy's destruction to be increased.

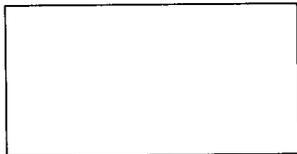
In this lies the main advantage of the given variant over the others. However, as it seems to us, there is also a negative side to it: the long duration of the initial strike. Consequently, it is desirable to resort to it only in a specific situation, particularly when prior to the conduct of the initial strike the front command will have obviously insufficient reconnaissance data on the disposition of the enemy nuclear means and troop groupings.

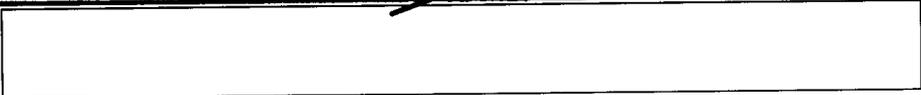
Air defense. Proceeding from the nature of new means of air defense and air attack, as Colonels Bulanov and Khrabrestiy noted in their speeches, present-day air defense should be set up taking into consideration the need for point cover of individual troop groupings and rear installations at the tactical level, and at the operational level -- area cover.

The main means of point cover of troops and installations are short-range surface-to-air missiles and small caliber antiaircraft artillery, and of area cover -- surface-to-air guided missiles of long, medium, and short range, and, until the troops are sufficiently equipped with missiles -- fighter aviation as well.

Discussion of the possible methods of cooperation between surface-to-air missile troops and aviation occupied a prominent position in the examination of the organization of air defense.

In the speeches of General-Mayor Kubanov, Colonel Kharitonov and others it was noted that in repelling the attacks of small groups of aircraft it is not desirable to carry out cooperation, [word missing] each branch arm is capable of independently destroying aircraft operating in its zone. The main shortcoming of this method is that it does not ensure full utilization of the combat capabilities of fighter aviation and continuous action against targets.





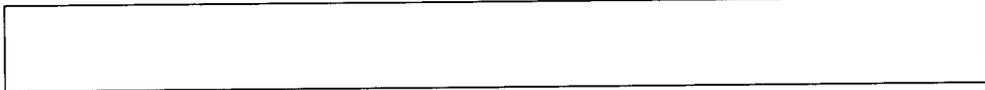
In conducting combat actions with surface-to-air missile troops and fighters in a single zone their combat efforts can be allocated by targets. This method of cooperation is most suitable when repelling massed air attacks. The method of allocating efforts by altitudes is desirable when repelling air attacks of great density, which are echeloned by altitude. In massed enemy air attacks from different directions the efforts should be allocated by sectors (axes).

Methods of troop combat actions. In the report and the speeches of the conference participants it was stated that in the first operation of the initial period of a war wide-scale employment from both sides of means of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, should be anticipated. Proceeding from this, the combat actions of the front will be labeled as a fierce struggle to gain fire superiority. Its most important element will be the neutralization of enemy nuclear means, which is one of the most complex tasks of armed combat. In carrying it out it is necessary to take into consideration that the enemy plans to employ during this phase approximately 70 percent of his presently available nuclear warheads by aviation, and only 30 percent by missiles. Consequently, the success of the destruction of the enemy's nuclear means depends to a considerable degree on the neutralization of his aviation.

As is known, present-day aviation continues to favor a grouped disposition on airfields, and therefore action against the airfields is one of the most effective methods of combating aviation. Considering that airfields will not always be located within the range of operational-tactical missiles, the front will be able to act against them only with aviation.

In the opinion of the participants in the conference, combating launchers and missile launching support means which are small and mobile targets, is especially complex. According to the enemy's current norms, Honest John and Corporal missile subunits move forward into fire positions only for the period of the missile launching and stay on the site no longer than thirty minutes. In this limited amount of time they must be reconnoitered and assessed. In this time frame the means allocated to destroy them have to prepare the data and strike the target before it is able to carry out the launch. Aviation, which is capable of reconnoitering the enemy nuclear attack means





in the course of battle and of acting against them immediately, can most effectively carry out this task.

Combat with enemy nuclear attack means can be successfully carried out by sabotage-reconnaissance detachments and groups, the actions of which must be strictly centralized.

The geographic isolation of the Northwestern Theater and the presence of the North Atlantic on the right flank, and the Baltic Sea on the left, as General-Mayor [missing] and [missing] mentioned in their speeches, attach special importance to cooperation (?) between the front troops and the efforts of the navy.

[four and one half paragraphs missing]

On the left flank cooperation between a fleet and front will most probably take on the character of joint actions to seize islands and certain naval bases. In cooperation with ships of the Baltic Fleet tactical forms will predominate. Apart from this, on both flanks the air defense means of the front will cover combat ships against enemy air strikes to the depth of the actions of fighter aviation.

Finally, on both flanks the landing of amphibious landing forces can be of considerable importance.

When there are relatively limited forces in a vast zone, the front will be able to conduct active combat actions only along separate axes,

[one and one half paragraphs missing]

In conducting an offensive, maneuvering, which in the Northwestern Theater of Military Operations is often carried out without using roads and across sections of terrain which are difficult of access, is of great importance. General Demchenko and Colonel Ivanov said that subunits in tracked equipment (the PT-76 tank and GTS medium tracked carrier) are capable of advancing cross country in the region beyond the polar circle at a rate of up to 70 kilometers per day. Subunits in wheeled vehicles advancing cross country under the more favorable natural conditions of the Karelian Isthmus are capable of covering





approximately 50 kilometers in one day with battles. However, as a result of physical exhaustion the personnel will be essentially combat ineffective.

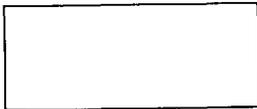
For successful actions in the Northwestern Theater of Military Operations maneuvering over water will be of particularly great importance. General Gorban and Colonel Ulyanov said that the presence

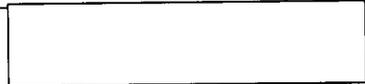
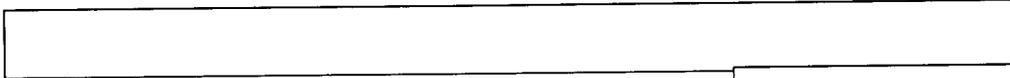
[two and one half paragraphs missing]

The negative side of the method being examined lies also in the fact that an antilanding defense set up according to the principle of defense in threatened sectors can be detected and identified by the enemy relatively easily. With the availability of modern means of neutralization and troop mobility, antilanding combat, especially in the first operation of the initial period of a war, can be organized on more effective principles. It should be based on the delivery of nuclear strikes against the amphibious landing force in conjunction with aggressive, primarily offensive actions of motorized rifle and tank large units and units, carried out by reserve large units of the front.

[two paragraphs missing]

Supplying front troops with missiles. In speaking on this problem, the participants in the conference mentioned that the method of delivering missiles in the given theater by land is subject to many accidents and does not guarantee that they will be delivered within the prescribed time limits. Engineer Lieutenant Colonel Kaplunov and Lieutenant Colonel Semin expressed support for utilizing helicopters to supply the troops with missiles. However, this method of delivery also has its vulnerable aspects. Helicopters can be destroyed relatively easily not only by aircraft, but also by enemy sabotage-reconnaissance groups. Consequently, it is necessary to allocate special flight zones for them and to support them reliably not only in the air, but also on the ground. Lieutenant Colonel Marushchenko proposed the introduction of further simplifications into the missile supplying procedure by decreasing the number of intermediate levels.





Troop control. In many of the speeches it was noted that in order to improve troop control it is above all necessary to introduce elements of automation and mechanization into that labor-consuming and complex process and to improve the organizational structure of the control system. The desire was expressed that practicable measures be undertaken to introduce electronic computers and other means of automation and mechanization into the troop control system as soon as possible.

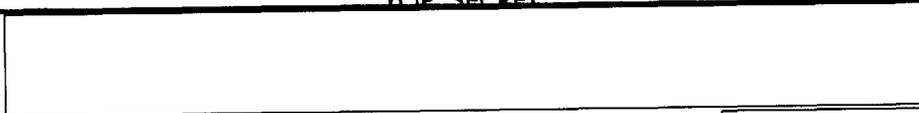
As regards the field headquarters of the front and army, they said that its structure is too cumbersome. Proceeding from [word missing], when there are a great number of independent directorates and departments directly subordinate to the commander, the accomplishment of many matters is impeded and the functions of the combined-arms staff are interfered with.

In the main report it was proposed to have two staffs in the field headquarters of the front and army: the operational staff and the staff of the rear. They should include all the directorates (departments) of the front and army now existing independently, except for the political directorate, the [word missing] directorate and the procurator's office.

In principle this position was supported by many of the participants in the conference, in particular by Colonels Kolesnikov and [missing], and Lieutenant Colonel Semin, although certain conference participants, mainly formation commanders, expressed apprehension that the proposed reorganization of the front and army headquarters might lead to a weakening of the command of troops and rear services.

Summing up the work of the conference, Colonel General M. N. Konstantinov emphasized that on the basis of their content and scale, front operations in the Northwestern Theater of Military Operations will be operational-strategic operations. A special feature of an operation under the conditions of this theater consists in the fact that [word missing] is combined with operations of the navy being conducted along the shores and on ocean lines of transportation. Essentially, combat actions will take on the character of a land-sea operation, for their objectives can be achieved only by the joint, united efforts of the front and fleet.





Given the present means of combat in geographically isolated theaters, similar to the Northwestern Theater, the matter of working out integrated operations conducted on land, in the air, and at sea with the forces of the rocket troops, air defense troops, ground and airborne forces, aviation and the navy under a single command, must be raised.

Dwelling at greater length on the nature of combat actions in the course of an operation, General Konstantinov noted that in organizing them it is necessary to combine the advance of the troops along roads and cross country, to maneuver over considerable distances on water, and to skilfully coordinate the advance of large troop masses with independently operating detachments and subunits. This must be taught to the troops, staffs, and command cadres in the course of operational and combat training.

